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DISCUSSION.

THE INTENTION OF THE NOETIC PSYCHOSIS.

IN a carefully elaborated article in the January number of the REVIEW, Mr. Walter B. Pitkin takes occasion to criticise certain statements made by me in a paper entitled "Is Subjective Idealism a Necessary Point of View for Psychology?"¹ Mr. Pitkin's criticisms appear to me to have no little force, and yet I feel that he has hardly grasped the meaning of my thought, and has attributed to me a thorough-going transcendentalism when my point of view is hardly to be classed as such. Therefore, I take this occasion of stating more definitely my position, especially as, in the article which has brought forth his criticism, I was not primarily concerned in establishing a point of view, but in pointing out certain seeming contradictions in the theoretical tendency in contemporaneous psychology, which on the whole leans, it appears to me, towards subjective idealism.²

My own position is contained in the statement that in *every noetic psychosis there is an intention which points to an extramental reality*. By this I do not mean that knowledge actually transcends itself in the sense of reaching an object that is outside itself. I have not in my mind the 'copy theory' of knowledge, which holds that the internal state is in some way a picture of an external reality, and that truth and falsehood depend upon the approximation of the picture to the original, with the further assumption that completed knowledge is a thorough-going correspondence between the external and internal, the reality and the mental image. Such a conception is, in my judgment, entirely untenable, and I attribute no such miracle to thought as a bridging over such a gulf as is assumed to exist in naive realism between subject and object. Neither do I mean by transcendence the arriving at some extra-experiential and *a priori* truth.

I designate by the intention in the noetic psychosis that attribute which tends to make static and universal the immanency of the immediate present, which gives to the content of the passing psychic state more than a fleeting existence, which in a word objectifies this

¹ *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, Vol. II, p. 229.

² I say this fully understanding that the school of Pragmatism categorically denies the impeachment of solipsism.

state. This is to my mind an extramental attitude,¹ and one without which knowledge is impossible. The most rudimentary state of consciousness that we can conceive of (possibly the pure experience of the pragmatist in its purity) lacks this, at least in a developed form, and therefore may be called feeling, or sensation, or immediate reality, or what you will. As the noetic psychosis becomes more and more developed, as we progress from mere sensation to perception, and as we go higher in the conceptual and rational psychoses, this intention becomes more and more marked. It is what gives a content to knowledge, and a relation between contents. Whether this objectification of experience actually gives to us a reality beyond experience (in the shape of a universe of reals or an absolute thinker) is a problem for metaphysics.

My interest in presenting the view is primarily psychological and not ontological. It seems to me, however, that without such an attitude in conscious experience, knowledge as such ceases, and we are reduced to the condition of pure psychic immanence, which rests entirely within itself and which points to no beyond, which in other words is no knowledge at all, call it whatever else you will.

Mr. Pitkin asks where is the intention in the noetic psychoses to be found. He urges that 'nobody maintains that the intention is a phase of the conscious content of every knowing act.' Continuing, he says, "We must therefore discover the supposed intention somewhere else than within the momentary experience itself." I quite agree that there is no full awareness of such an intention in every noetic state, but urge that there are degrees of awareness from the most dimly subconscious up to the more fully illuminated focal states. I believe that a dim awareness of this intention can be found in every state of knowing.²

All noetic states possess a content, simple or relatively complex, and to recognize this content means psychologically to have an attitude (an experienced attitude) toward it. As I analyze this intention I find it to be largely a matter of attention, which again means,

¹ I use the words 'extramental attitude' as meaning an attitude of extramentality and as equivalent to a transmental attitude, an attitude that points to a beyond — not a beyond that comes in a future experience, but a beyond that is outside the present experience. The attitude itself cannot be outside the mind. That would be a contradiction in terms.

² Indeed, if no such awareness existed, this fact would not prevent the intention from being actually there. It seems to me that here Dr. Pitkin is falling into an error, — namely, that he assumes that to be conscious you must be conscious that you are conscious. This involves an infinite *regressus*.

as far as I can discover, muscular adjustment to the object of knowledge ; or, from another point of view, will. The more the content becomes clearly defined and differentiated, the more this sense of adjustment to it comes into evidence. And this means that I endeavor more and more to make it permanent, and to divorce it from the fluctuations of my psychic states. Take such a simple matter as the visual perception of the table before me. As it becomes for me more and more an object of knowledge I adjust myself to it more persistently. My wandering eye movements are checked, I follow its outline, I place my body more completely in a state of attention in relation to it, its parts become more clearly defined. Thus content grows in complexity and the attentive state becomes progressively pronounced, as muscular adjustments and inhibitions register themselves more persistently in consciousness. Here we have the intention and the psychic correlate in terms of experienced sensations of muscular adjustments, and here also we have the permanence which gives objectivity to the content ; which makes it extramental, if you will.

Mr. Pitkin is quite correct in assuming that I mean to refer to content as that which is intended in the conscious act. He then asks the question : " And yet how can this be made to harmonize with the succeeding statement ' that it is this intention that gives an object to our knowledge ' ? Using the simple method of substitution, we would discover from the above that the act of subscribing an extramental reality to every noetic content is what gives an object to our knowledge. Such a situation is too mysterious for me to grasp."

This objection may have logical force, but I fail to find any psychological difficulty involved in my position. Content and object are the same thing. The content is born in the objectifying tendency, and the objectifying tendency becomes a conscious fact as the content appears. There may be a logical prius between content and object, but there is a psychological identity. To know, is to objectify ; to have a content ; to intend ; to make extramental. These are not separate elements. They are one and the same thing.

My critic finds difficulty with the statement that " knowledge-of-book is one total complex in which the knowledge and the book are separated only by a false abstraction." He urges that the transmental intention makes the content something different from the *merely* given, and concludes that under such circumstances I have made knowledge deceitful by maintaining that the object of knowledge cannot be legitimately separated from the knowledge itself. Now this objection doubtless would hold if I had ascribed to the intention a transcen-

dental function such as Mr. Pitkin evidently thinks that I have in mind. But when I hold simply that the intention makes permanent the fleeting character of the merely given, I believe the objection to have little force. I can look at the noetic state as knowledge, or I can objectify it as a book. It is the same thing, as James would say, viewed from two standpoints.

Mr. Pitkin believes that the most remarkable confusion is found in the assumption that everything which transcends the present moment is transmental, and urges in opposition that reference to a past object is no more transmental than the reference to a present one is. If, for example, one recalls the city Paris, the object of his mental state is present just as really as if Paris were present in the actual sensory experience. With this I should certainly most heartily agree. The object of a memory experience is present in exactly the same sense in which all objects of knowledge are present to the noetic state. Indeed, the object of a state of pure productive imagination (a centaur, for example) is present in this sense, just as is the object of my present consciousness, the paper on which I am writing.

But what does it imply to recall in memory the city Paris? It seems to me that in this recall there is contained as an essential part of it the implication that Paris has existed all the time between my last experience of it and my present memory. It has not gone out of existence when it has left my mind, it has not followed the course of my conscious experiences. This means that I have made of Paris an extramental reality. Suppose again I imagine a city once in existence, but now destroyed. Here again I assume that my consciousness is not identical with the city; otherwise my memory image would recreate it. It seems to me that every memory state thus has in it an extramental reference in the sense in which I am using the term, that is, in the sense of intending to give an independence to its content,—an existence apart from the *mere* state of consciousness in which this content exists. Even if I imagine my centaur, I give to that object an existence external to my passing fancy in so far, at least, as I recognize that the parts which compose it are independent of the fluctuations of my caprice.

At the end of his article, Mr. Pitkin sums up very conveniently and clearly the various kinds of noetic transcendence which he has set forth in the discussion; but I fail to find, in any of them, the meaning which I have attempted to give to the term 'intention of knowledge.' I do not mean by intention either a going out toward an unknown goal or a leap from the present now and the spatially here to something be-

yond ; or the experiencing of some new sensation, or the excess of meaning over process ; or, finally, the completion of experience by itself in ever higher and more universal terms (the transcendence of the pragmatist). I had in mind quite a different thought, which implied no such separation between knowledge and its object as any of these theories suppose, — a separation which makes knowledge always unattainable. Instead, I wish to present the thought that transcendence can mean no going beyond experience, but the giving to experience of a quality which in the moment of knowing takes away its fleeting and temporal character, and equips it with a permanence and a reality which make it possible to be known.

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